

XXXVII.—Note on the *Hypotriorchis castanonotus* of

Dr. HEUGLIN. By P. L. SELATER.

(Plate XII.)

1881
275

THE series of Abyssinian birds collected by Sir William Harris during his residence at Schoa, which was formerly in the Museum of the East India Company in Leadenhall Street, having been transferred to the British Museum, I have been enabled, through Mr. George Gray's kindness, to compare the specimen entered in Horsfield and Moore's Catalogue of the East India Company's Museum as "*Polihierax semitorquatus*" with typical examples of the true *Falco semitorquatus*, Smith, collected in South Africa by the describer of the species. In the first placè I should mention that the Abyssinian specimen of Sir W. Harris has not the red back, which is stated by Dr. Heuglin to be found in both sexes of his *H. castanonotus*. This point of difference, therefore, which seems to be the chief ground on which Dr. Heuglin has maintained the specific distinction between his bird and the southern *Falco semitorquatus*, seems to fail entirely; and we must suppose that Dr. Heuglin is in error in stating that the male of the Abyssinian bird, when adult, resembles the female in having a red back, although this may be the case in young males. On comparing the Abyssinian bird with the South African specimen in corresponding plumage, the differences which present themselves are but slight. The head and neck are of rather a darker slaty-grey, the wings rather longer, and the legs generally rather stronger and stouter in the Abyssinian specimen; but the two birds are otherwise so much alike, that I should much hesitate in considering them as specifically distinct. The white external marginations of the ends of the rectrices appear to be of about the same extent in both specimens.

1870
423

1860
477

The figure (Pl. XII.) is an exact copy of Dr. Heuglin's original figure of *Hypotriorchis castanonotus*, which accompanied his description of the bird as already given in 'The Ibis' (1860, p. 407). ✓ It represents, according to him, an adult male, two-thirds of the natural size. Dr. Smith, in his 'Illustrations of the Zoology of South Africa,' has figured the female of *Polihierax semitorquatus*; but this is, I believe, the first published representation of the



HYPOTRIORCHIS CASTANONOTUS.

Poliohistrax semitorquatus Female. M. & N. 2nd edis p 55

red-backed stage of plumage in this little-known species of Accipitrine.

XXXVIII.—*Notes on the Ornithology of Timor.*

By ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE.

IN pursuance of my plan of exploring the Zoology of the Malayan Archipelago, I have just completed a three-and-a-half months' residence at Delli, in the eastern part of the island of Timor, and have devoted myself principally to the Birds, every other class of animals being very poorly represented in this barren island.

Owing to ill-health, the wet season, and a rebellion of the native tribes, I was unable to extend my excursions far from the town of Delli. I resided, however, in one of the most fertile valleys, about two miles from the town, and spent two weeks on the mountains at an elevation of 2000 feet. I was accompanied on this excursion by Mr. Geach, a mining engineer, who has been engaged here for more than two years in search of minerals, during which time he has traversed the island in several places from sea to sea, and who is altogether better acquainted than any person living with the eastern half of Timor.

From this gentleman I obtained much information as to the character of the country, which seems to be very uniform, and not likely to be more productive in any other parts than in those that I have explored.

Timor seems to consist entirely of a chain of mountains, rising in the central range to 5000 and 6000 feet, and near either coast to about 3000. In only two or three places in the island are there any level plains, the rest being a succession of mountainous ridges and precipitous ravines. Nowhere in the island are there any forests comparable with those of the other parts of the Archipelago, all the lower hills being covered with an open growth of more or less scrubby *Eucalypti*, and anything like a lofty or luxuriant vegetation being confined to those places in the ravines or on the mountain spurs where a little rich soil has been accumulated. At a height of above 4000 feet even this vegetation disappears, and a scanty herbage of coarse grasses alone covers the higher ridges. Fruit-bearing trees are comparatively